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European Communities

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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23 April 1974

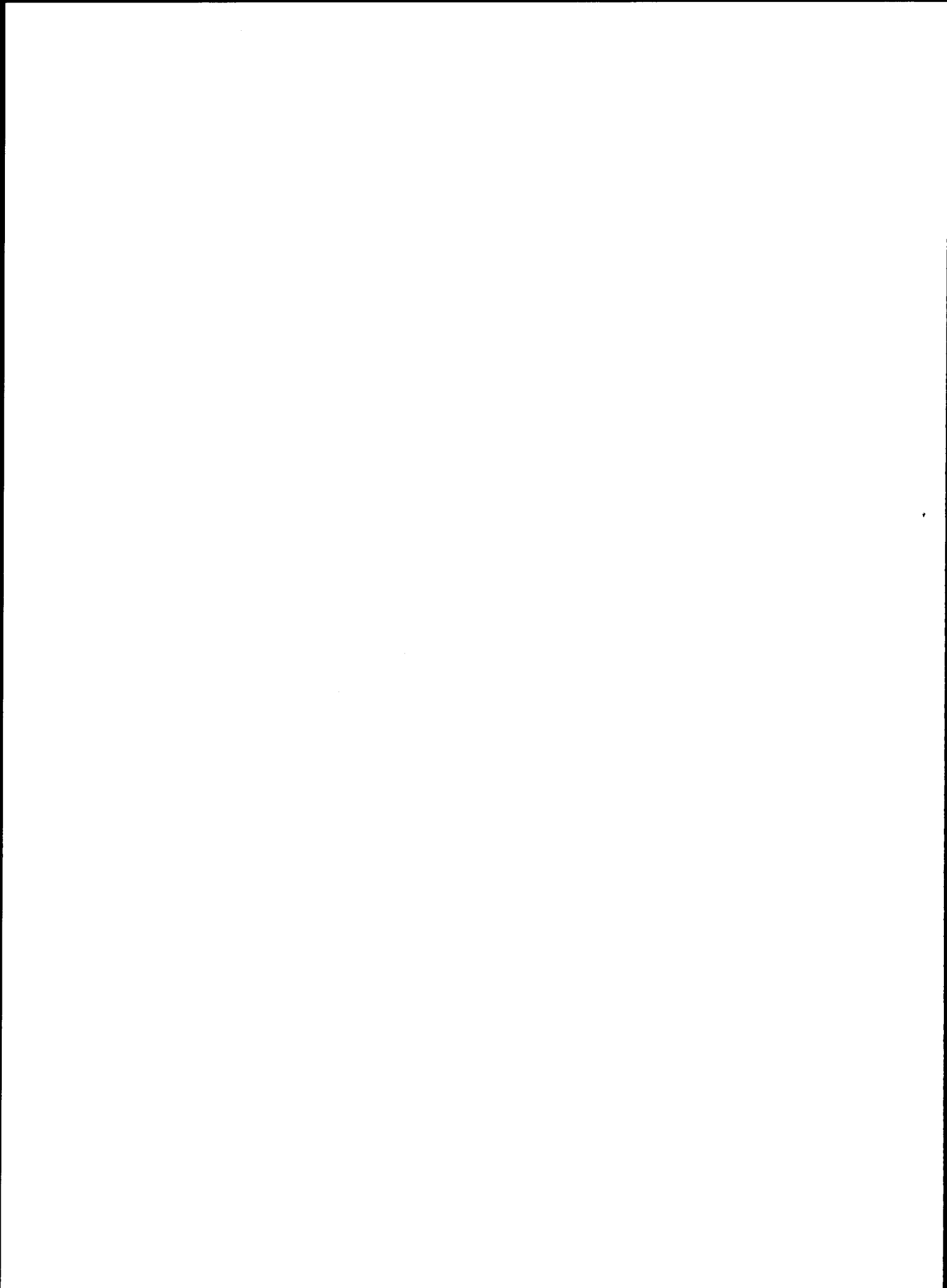
DOCUMENT 47/74

Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment

on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc. 302/73) for a recommendation addressed to the Member States regarding the application of the principle of the 40-hour week and 4 weeks' annual paid holidays

Rapporteur : Mr Hervé LAUDRIN



By letter of 11 December 1973 the Council of the European Communities consulted the European Parliament on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities for a recommendation of the Council addressed to the Member States regarding the application of the 40-hour week and four weeks' annual paid holiday (Doc. 302/73).

At its plenary sitting of 14 January 1974 the European Parliament referred this document to the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment as the committee responsible.

The committee appointed Mr LAUDRIN rapporteur at its meeting of 22/23 January 1974.

It considered the Commission proposal at its meetings of 19 and 20 February and 10 April. At the latter meeting it unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution and explanatory statement.

The following were present: Mr Bertrand, chairman; Mr Adams, vice-chairman; Mr Laudrin, rapporteur; Mr Brégégère, Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker, Lady Elles, Mr Van der Gun, Mr Pêtre, Mr Vermeylen, Mr Wieldraaijer.

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A

The Committee on Social Affairs and Employment hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

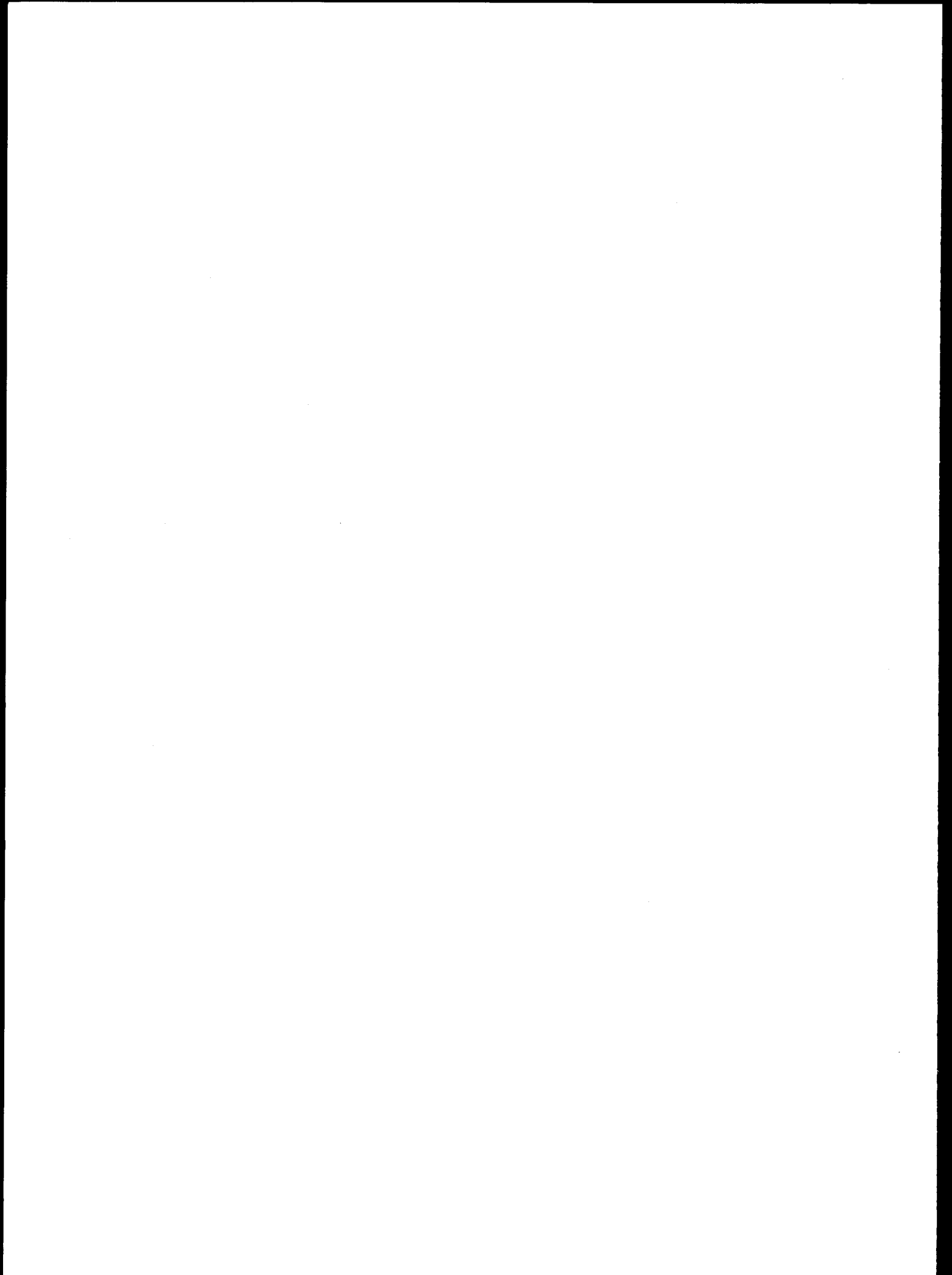
MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

embodying the opinion of the European Parliament on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a recommendation of the Council addressed to the Member States regarding the application of the principle of the 40-hour week and four weeks' annual paid holiday

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council¹,
 - having been consulted by the Council (Doc. 302/73),
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment (Doc. 47/74);
1. Welcomes the steps taken by the Commission to define and pursue the objectives in the programme of social action;
 2. Considers it important to harmonize working conditions and paid holidays to improve the quality of life;
 3. Recommends that consultation should take place between the two sides of industry at Community level to establish the principle of the 40-hour week and four weeks' annual paid holiday;
 4. Expresses the wish that Member States will implement the principle of the 40-hour week by 31 December 1975 and that of four weeks' paid holiday by 31 December 1976;
 5. Calls for more rapid implementation of a genuine employment policy and a regional policy to make up for the economic backwardness which stands in the way of improved social welfare;
 6. Approves the Commission's proposal;
 7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and the report of its committee to the Council and Commission of the European Communities.

¹ OJ No. C 8, 31 January 1974, p.27



EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. Working hours and paid holidays in the Member States are regulated either by law or by collective agreement. The Commission wishes to reduce the resulting diversity so that these States can make common provisions for all European workers.
2. The purpose of this recommendation is to implement the provisions of Article 117 of the Treaty, in which the Member States agree upon the need to promote improved working conditions and an improved standard of living for workers so as to make possible the harmonization of those conditions while the improvement is being maintained.
3. The Council considers that the principle of the 40-hour week and the four weeks' annual paid holiday should be introduced by 1 January 1975, as provided in Action I₅ of the Community Social Action Programme.
4. These measures represent a marked improvement in the quality of life, harmonize working conditions in the Member States and eliminate distortions of the labour market.
5. Member States may either decide to apply this principle by virtue of their legislative authority in this field, or promote it by collective agreements.

There is, in any case, no doubt that, in the terms of Article 145 of the Treaty,¹ legal provisions on working hours and paid holidays would contribute to a more coordinated European economic policy.

¹Article 145 of the EEC Treaty: To ensure that the objectives set out in this Treaty are attained, the Council shall, in accordance with the provisions of this Treaty:

- ensure coordination of the general economic policies of the Member States;
- have power to take decisions.

ANNEX

| | Year | Belgium | Germany | France | Italy | Lux- embourg | Neth- erlands | United Kingdom | Ireland | Denmark |
|--|------|-----------------|---------|-------------------|-------|-----------------|---------------------------|------------------------|---------|----------------------------|
| 1. Legal working week (in hours) | 1973 | 45 | 48 | 40 | 48 | 44 | 48 | no legis- lation | 48 | no legis- lation |
| 2. Working week fixed by collective bargaining | | 40-43 | 40 | 40-44 | 40 | 40-44 | 40 from end of 1974 | 40 | 40 | 40 from 2.12.74 |
| 3. Legal holidays (days) | 1973 | 18 | 15-18 | 24 | 12 | 18-24 | 15-18 | - | 12 | 24 |
| 4. Length of holidays fixed by collective bargaining | 1973 | 20-22 | 18-24 | 24 | 14-20 | 18-24 | 17-20 | 15-18 | 18 | 24 |
| 5. Holiday pay | 1973 | 18 days' pay | 25-40% | Partial 25-50% | - | - | 8% | - | - | 2% of one years' pay |

The information provided by the Commission for 1973 supplements the information contained in the Report on the Development of the Social Situation in the Community in 1972.

Members' attention is drawn to the comparative table drawn up by the Commission of the European Communities on hours of work per week in industries in the Community.